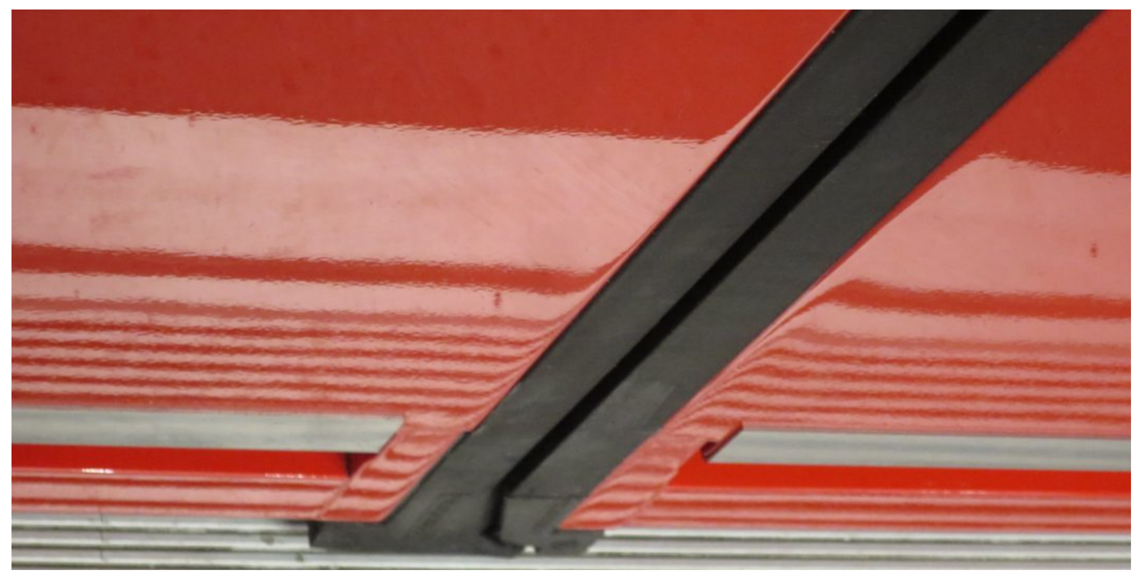






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TECHNISCHER TOTALITARISMUS: MACHT, HERRSCHAFT UND GEWALT BEI GÜNTHER ANDERS

DOCUMENTATION, MASHINES, NECROPOLITICS

BARBARISM, BIOPOLITIK POSTMODERNER KÖRPER, CAPITALISM, GÜNTHER ANDERS, GEWALT, MACHT, MARXISM, WELTZUSTAND TECHNIK

ABSTRACT

Günther Anders, unlike his first wife Hannah Arendt, developed neither an elaborate theory of power nor of violence. Although both key issues of political and social theory are vividly present in his later works on the atomic bomb, on the structure of modern work, and in his highly controversial reflections upon civil disobedience (Gewalt – ja oder nein). This article reconstructs and clarifies Anders' implicit and explicit remarks on power and violence, technocracy, and violent self-defence by confronting them with the classic position of Max Weber, Heinrich Popitz' anthropological-sociological approach, Karl Marx's automatic subject, and Johan Galtungs idea of structural violence. Thus appear the outlines of an Andersian theory of technological empowerment (Selbstermächtigung), rooted in Anders' early and largely unpublished philosophical anthropology from the 1920s and 30s, and the later idea of a Promethian gap ("prometheisches Gefälle") between human capacities and the artificial world deriving from them. According to Anders man is an indigent as well as a utopian being, able to imagine and produce not only more than nature offers and more than he will ever need but more than he could ever understand and handle on his own. In this perspective, history of mankind – the promising attempt to create an artificial "second nature" within nature, in short: progress – seems to be a gradual process of disempowering man for the benefit of a technological regime in the very strong sense of 'technocracy'. The current phase of this global process culminates, Anders argues, in a technological world state ("Weltzustand Technik") wherein atomic armament and the growing number of atomic power plants cause a juridicial state of emergency. Anders denied that this historical stage could be reversible but he thought its atomic constitution could be alleviated. According to him one step towards a stabilized even though not fundamentally altered "Weltzustand" was violent action against those he cryptically called the "power elite" – a demand which is contradictory to his own concept of technocracy but nonetheless a clue to his specific grasp of technological power.

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